

HANDOUT

11 Critical Variables:

NATURE AND STABILITY OF THE STATE

1. **Definition:** The nature and stability of the state refers to a actor's internal cohesiveness and effectiveness with respect to population, economic infrastructures, political stability (leadership concerns or the challengers to the leadership), legitimacy, open participation in governmental processes, goals and agendas. This also considers the state's ability to weather difficulties, endure fluctuations, and resolve internal strife to maintain stability and support, both domestically and internationally. The variable also reflects the level of global recognition of the actor's perceived authority and legitimacy.

2. **Range of complexity qualifier selection:** The qualifiers of Complex, Neutral and Simplistic were selected to reflect the overall level of cohesiveness and stability of a particular state. It must be stated that an actor may in fact cross the categories at times, based on the level of change, instability or major economic, political or military development.

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL RELATIONS

1. **Definition.** Regional and global relationships include political, economic, military, religious or cultural mergers and/or partnerships. An actor's membership or allegiance to such a relationship can determine its actions in term of support, motivation, and alliance constructs. Participants in multinational operations must understand other partners' goals, doctrine, motivation, and ethnicity to conduct efficient operations. As in any merger, differences in philosophies, goals, doctrine, motivation, and ethnicity will exist. An evaluation of military relationships is prudent and will help build rapport and respect among participants.

2. **Range of Complexity qualifier selection:** A qualifier to measure the level of participation was selected to help gauge the degree of complexity present in the operational environment.

ECONOMICS

1. **Definition:** The relationship of the actor relative to the development, production, and management and distribution of material wealth, finance, or the necessities of life. Economics help define an actor's power relationship with other actors from a both a regional and global perspective. It helps establish the boundaries between the "haves" and the "have-nots".

2. **Range of complexity qualifier selection:** The economic qualifier reveals the level of economic production, distribution, integration, involvement, stability and significance of the actor's degree of economic development.

SOCIOLOGICAL DEMOGRAPHICS

1. **Definition:** Sociological demographics refer to the trends and impact of an actor's vital statistics and the cultural/ethnic makeup of a given region. Important dimensions include migration trends, population profiles (aging, youth bulge), and level/rate of urbanization, fertility rates, overall standards of living, and cohesiveness of ethnic/religious groups. Such factors may be replacing ideology as the leading causes of disputes. Clearly, the effects of urbanization, displaced civilians, and ethnic self-determination will dramatically increase the complexity of current and future operational environments.

Range of complexity qualifier selection: The qualifiers Complex, Neutral, and Simplistic were selected to capture the impact of current and future trends/changes in global demographic development. Comparing/analyzing different concerns and issues between the developed and developing actors can easily highlight the impact of such demographic trends.

INFORMATION

1. **Definition:** The act of informing, or the state of being informed, coupled with the knowledge derived from study, experiences, observing events, or instruction. Information considers the access, use, manipulation, distribution, and reliance on information-based systems by the population of an actor into civil/military capabilities. It also delineates the precision of the flow of information between systems and actors necessary to support the actor's infrastructure. Information technology is defined as the systems or mechanisms for preserving or transmitting information.

2. **Range of Complexity qualifier:** The information qualifier reveals the level of integration of information and information systems, and the willingness to embrace the concepts of an information-based networked culture into the fabric of society.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. **Definition:** The physical environment considers circumstances and conditions surrounding and influencing an actor. This environment helps define an actor's relationship to other actors from a physical or geographic perspective. The primary factors defining the environment are the elements of terrain, weather, and environmental conditions.

2. **Range of complexity qualifier selection:** The environment qualifier describes the physical characteristics that affect an actor, and its interaction with other actors. Two differing aspects of this variable are the physical aspects, and the human considerations. Physical aspects of the environment are the defining characteristics when considering attributes, and will have the greatest impact on the operational environment. These aspects encompass the geographic considerations of topography, climate, weather, terrain, hydrology, elevation, vegetation, resources, and land use. However, human considerations can be characteristics of the environment that may have a profound impact on the operational environment. These considerations encompass attitudes toward the environment such as: boundaries, protection or conservationist ideals versus pollution, level of care and concern, willingness to jeopardize or exploit the environment to achieve gains, and waste management. Human considerations may fall within any of the scope of attributes, and will vary between separate operational environments. This is due to the relationship of other variables (usually culture, economics, and geopolitics). The qualifiers of Complex, Neutral, and Simplistic will be used.

TECHNOLOGY

1. **Definition:** Technology refers to the body of knowledge available to a culture that applies science to industrial and commercial objectives, and it also reflects the equipment and technology that an actor or entity could import. Technology encompasses the ability of an actor to conduct R&D for technology integration into civil/military capabilities, and the ability to maintain cohesive research efforts. It establishes a scientific and industrial base to support the development and application of technology, and the resources necessary to support growth of the technological base.
2. **Range of Complexity qualifier selection:** The technology qualifier reveals the level of integration, stability and significance of the actor's relationship to technology.

MILITARY CAPABILITIES

1. **Definition:** The ability of an actor to field combat forces, equip and train them for war, and leverage them in the administration of diplomacy or policies domestically, regionally, or globally through power projection.
3. **Range of complexity qualifier selection:** The military capabilities qualifier reveals a difference in quality and performance between the military forces of actors which typify a full spectrum of military operations or capabilities. The qualifiers of Highly Successful, Moderately Successful, and Minimally Successful will be used.

EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. **Definition:** This variable attempts to capture the significance of the presence of external organizations (NGOs and PVOs) on the operational environment. Like coalition forces, these organizations have their unique perspective. They are typically groups of individuals united for a common cause, such as humanitarian assistance. In addition, organizations and individual actors may have economic, political, religious, cultural or private motivations, such as revenge, which differ from their public organizational mission statements. U.S. military personnel must be cognizant of the existence of both stated and hidden interests and objectives of others. The goals, organizational style, and actions of these national/international organizations operating in the area may either be helpful to realizing the goals of the host nation and/or U.S. forces, or may create situations that precipitate conflict.
2. **Range of Complexity qualifier selection:** The qualifiers of Complex, Neutral and Simplistic were selected.

NATIONAL WILL

1. **Definition:** National will encompasses a unification of values, morals, and effort between the population, the leadership or government, and the military. Through this unification, all parties are willing to individually sacrifice for the achievement of the unified goal. The interaction of military actions and political judgments, conditioned by national will, serve to further define and limit the achievable objectives of a conflict, and, thus, to determine its duration and conditions of termination.

2. **Range of Complexity qualifier selection:** A qualifier based on level and complexity of support was used to capture the overall “solidity” of national will.

TIME

“The most significant factor to consider is time. It is the only nonrenewable, and often the most critical, resource.” p. 5-27, FM 101-5

1. **Definition:** Time is one of, if not the, most significant planning factors driving decision-making. It can be a significant force multiplier. The advantage will go to the side that most effectively uses time. How much time is available and how long events are predicted to take will impact on every aspect of military planning: force package development, force flow rate, quality of intelligence preparation of the area of operations and estimates, need for forward-deployed forces and logistics, etc.

2. **Range of Complexity qualifier selection:** Qualifiers representing the complexity of time are used.